

IN THE MATTER of the Public Order Emergency Commission
Established by O.C. 2022-392 pursuant to the *Inquiries Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-11
The Honourable Paul S. Rouleau, Commissioner

AFFIDAVIT OF LUC BEAUDOIN

I, the undersigned, Luc Beaudoin, of the Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau in the Province of Quebec, do solemnly affirm the following.

General

1. I have been the Director of the Service de police de la Ville de Gatineau (**SPVG**), since December 7, 2018. Through my duties, I have knowledge of certain facts that may be germane to the mandate of the Public Order Emergency Commission. Where I do not have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this affidavit, I am testifying on the basis of information that I believe to be true and accurate.

2. The SPVG is the municipal police force of the City of Gatineau, a city of more than 290,000 people covering more than 342 square kilometres. The SPVG therefore offers level 3 services in accordance with section 70 of Quebec’s *Police Act* (CQLR c. P-13.1). The SPVG must therefore provide “crowd control involving risk of disturbance” service. For “crowd control involving high risk of disturbance or riot” service,¹ we have to request the assistance of the Sûreté du Québec.

¹ *Regulation respecting the police services that municipal police forces and the Sûreté du Québec must provide according to their level of jurisdiction* (CQLR c. P-13.1, r. 6).

3. The “Freedom Convoy” demonstrations were considered a “crowd control involving risk of disturbance” event, and the SPVG was therefore the only police force responsible for the events taking place in our jurisdiction.

4. One of the responsibilities of the Sûreté du Québec is to act as a supplementary police service. As such, it is responsible for providing police services not provided by the municipal police service, in accordance with the first paragraph of section 79 of the *Police Act*. For example, if the situation had deteriorated and “crowd control involving high risk of disturbance or riot” had been required, the Sûreté du Québec would have been responsible for taking action to assist us in restoring public order.

5. Furthermore, if the SPVG had not been able to ensure “crowd control involving risk of disturbance” as required by the *Police Act*, the Minister of Public Security could have asked the Sûreté du Québec “to maintain order” in Gatineau even without a request for assistance from the SPVG, in accordance with the second paragraph of section 79 of the *Police Act*.

6. In addition, the SPVG must go through the Sûreté du Québec to obtain assistance from other police services. If the Sûreté du Québec does not have the capacity to assist the SPVG in a timely manner, it may refer the request for assistance to another police force. In the event of an immediate emergency, the SPVG may obtain assistance from another police force without going through the Sûreté du Québec.

7. The SPVG requested the assistance of the Sûreté du Québec on two occasions during the demonstrations associated with the “Freedom Convoy” movement. The first request was to assist and collaborate in traffic management at the beginning of the event, and the second was for crowd

management at the end of the event. The Sûreté du Québec always provided the requested assistance in a timely manner.

8. The City of Gatineau presents particular policing challenges because of its proximity to the City of Ottawa. Five bridges connect the two cities: the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge, the Portage Bridge, the Alexandra Bridge, the Chaudière Bridge and the Champlain Bridge.

9. The Quebec portion of the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge is under the jurisdiction of the Sûreté du Québec, as it is part of Highway 5, a provincial highway. All the other bridges mentioned above are entirely under the jurisdiction of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (**RCMP**). The SPVG has jurisdiction at the entrances/exits of those bridges.

10. Owing to the proximity of the City of Gatineau to the City of Ottawa, the SPVG works regularly with the Ottawa Police Service (**OPS**) and other partners in the National Capital Region. Although the SPVG and the OPS are governed by different legislation, their collaboration and mutual support are excellent. The SPVG was unable to provide assistance to the OPS, as it was already busy responding to demonstrations in Gatineau.

11. The SPVG is a member of INTERSECT, a multi-jurisdictional emergency preparedness group for the National Capital Commission. The SPVG is also a member of the National Capital Region Command Centre (**NCRCC**), a central decision-making and response coordination office for major incidents and emergencies, led by the RCMP.

12. The SPVG is not part of the Hendon project and does not receive Hendon reports. I understand from my discussions with the Commission's lawyers that that project is similar to the Service du renseignement criminel du Québec, a program of the Sûreté du Québec.

Pre-arrival information

13. On or about January 25, 2022, following meetings with various partners, I was informed by the officers of the Operational Support Division that more than 5,000 people and vehicles were heading to Gatineau to join the demonstrators converging on Ottawa. The convoys going to Gatineau came from various parts of Quebec.

14. The exact number of demonstrators expected was unknown, but estimates ranged from 500 to 1,000 people.

15. The intentions of the truckers were unknown at the time. The SPVG had received no indication that they planned to stay for an extended period of time. The SPVG expected the demonstrators to arrive and leave the same day or the next day, as had always been the case for ordinary demonstrations.

Preparations

16. On or about January 25, 2022, I assigned Chief Inspector Yannick Bélisle to manage the event associated with the arrival of the convoys in Gatineau.

17. The SPVG prepared an operational plan in response to the arrival of the convoys. That plan was essentially aimed at managing traffic related to the vehicles arriving in Gatineau. The plan also included a subplan for maintaining and restoring public order. The subplan was partially implemented in response to the gatherings that took place in our jurisdiction.

18. Despite the very limited information about the demonstrators' intentions, the plan covered various potential scenarios. However, it did not anticipate the possibility that the demonstrators would move in and remain in the area for an extended period of time.

19. The original operational plan provided for designated parking areas for the demonstrators' vehicles. The goal was to allow the demonstrators to leave their vehicles there and walk to the demonstration in Ottawa, anticipating the risk of traffic congestion on Ottawa streets and the possibility that leaving vehicles on the bridges would pose a public safety hazard.

20. The operational plan was shared with partner police agencies to ensure proper coordination during the event. The SPVG also received the OPS's initial plan but saw nothing wrong with the idea of letting the trucks into the downtown area, since everyone expected the demonstrators to leave after their demonstration.

Arrival

21. The Sûreté du Québec escorted the convoy vehicles until they arrived in Gatineau on January 29, 2022.

22. The number of demonstrators in Gatineau varied greatly, ranging from about 20 to 200 demonstrators, rising to 500 to 1,000 on weekends. They were not violent, generally complied with instructions and did not cause public disorder. They mainly wanted to join the demonstration in Ottawa.

23. Some vehicles complied with police orders and parked in areas designated by the SPVG and then walked to the demonstration in Ottawa. However, other demonstrators made an agreement with the manager of the Zibi parking lot, without the knowledge of the SPVG, to park in that lot. The demonstrators at the Zibi parking lot were mostly members of the "Farfadaas" group.

Management of the demonstrators

24. Generally, the demonstrators did not want to park in Gatineau to demonstrate in Ottawa. Most of them wanted to park in Ottawa to participate in the main demonstration. In view of the limited space in Ottawa, the SPVG, in coordination with the NCRCC, strategically decided to block bridges to stop the demonstrators' vehicles and instead redirected them to designated spaces, as per the operational plan.

25. The designated spaces in the plan were never full. This was communicated to the partner police services, but the demonstrators in Ottawa did not want to move their vehicles to Quebec.

26. The demonstrators were always permitted to walk to the demonstration in Ottawa. On occasion, the SPVG, in coordination with the NCRCC, had to redirect demonstrators crossing on foot to certain bridges rather than others to ensure public safety, including that of the demonstrators.

27. For example, on or about January 30, 2022, the SPVG and the RCMP redirected demonstrators associated with the Farfadaas group from the Portage Bridge to the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge to avoid excessive congestion on the Ontario side of the Portage Bridge. The demonstrators were still able to reach the demonstration in Ottawa, but via a route more conducive to public safety.

28. Throughout the demonstration, the SPVG's primary goal was to ensure public safety while allowing the demonstrators to exercise their fundamental rights. That balance was not always easy to achieve, as the right to protest is not always well defined, and there is a fine line between police intervention that is too strict and police intervention that is not strict enough. That challenge was exacerbated by the fact that this type of police intervention was taking place in volatile circumstances, often with very limited information.

Farfadaas and Zibi parking lot

29. Once the demonstrators had moved into the Zibi parking lot, a private parking lot, the SPVG did not have the legal authority to remove them from that location. The SPVG explained to the parking lot manager that he needed to obtain an injunction to ensure that the SPVG could remove the demonstrators from the site. Nevertheless, the SPVG restricted additional vehicles from entering the parking lot. It also prevented vehicles that left the site from returning.

30. The Farfadaas group can be described as having an extremist, anti-government, anti-authority ideology. However, the group was non-violent and had a certain hierarchy. As a result, it was possible to have constructive discussions with the group's leader, Steeve "L'Artiss" Charland, despite some resistance from him and the group.

31. The managers of the SPVG's Maintain and Restore Order (**MRO**) unit (Lieutenant Blais, Lieutenant Grégoire and Sergeant Sauvé) had daily discussions with Mr. Charland. The SPVG does not have a specialized unit for dealing with demonstrators, but the MRO managers are used to dealing with this type of situation and have a lot of experience in communicating with demonstrators.

32. Through those daily discussions, the SPVG was able to learn more about the group, including its goals for the event. Those goals were mainly to camp at the Zibi parking lot for an indefinite period of time and join the demonstration in Ottawa during the day. The group showed little concern for violating municipal by-laws, but its members were careful not to commit criminal offences.

33. The SPVG heard that the demonstrators were being paid three times the amount of fines they received and that they were being paid \$1,000 per day to stay on the site, but the SPVG was never able to confirm or refute that information.

Injunction and departure

34. On February 17, 2022, the injunction prohibiting the demonstrators from camping at the Zibi parking lot went into effect. That injunction allowed the SPVG to demand that the demonstrators leave the parking lot. The SPVG did not have to use force to remove the demonstrators from the site.

35. The SPVG learned that on the night of February 18, 2022, most of the demonstrators had relocated to the Notre-Dame-du-Très-Saint-Rosaire church, with the agreement of the parish manager.

36. The demonstrators were located within 50 metres of a school, contrary to the *Act to establish a perimeter around certain places in order to regulate demonstrations in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic* (SQ 2021, c. 26). The SPVG enforced the act and demanded that the demonstrators leave. They left Gatineau the same day.

Emergencies Act

37. The SPVG was able to address the issues caused by the presence of demonstrators in Gatineau with the legislative tools already at its disposal and did not need the *Emergencies Act*.

38. The SPVG was directed by the Department of Public Security not to use the measures implemented by the *Emergencies Act*.

39. I have not had any discussions with any government agency about the use of the *Emergencies Act* during the Freedom Convoy events.

Recommendations

40. Information sharing between the various police services is a necessity for success, hence the importance of pooling and sharing our information in advance.

41. In addition, the Quebec policing model allows for the sharing of policing responsibility with the provincial police for certain events that are beyond the capacity of a municipal police service. That model should be studied to ensure better police response in other Canadian provinces.

Solemnly affirmed before me at the
City of Gatineau in the Province of
Quebec, this 14th day of November
2022

Commissioner of Affidavits (or
appropriate designation)

Luc Beaudoin